

THE COMMON SCHOOL JOURNAL.

VOL. II.

BOSTON, NOVEMBER 2, 1840.

No. 21.

PALMER'S PRIZE ESSAY.

[Continued from the last Number, page 318.]

CHAPTER VI.

Moral Education.

ALAS ! what a blank is here ! How little, how very little, has ever been attempted, towards developing and giving a proper direction to the social affections and moral feelings of early youth ! And yet, when we examine with care the little that *has* been done ; when we see with what crude notions, nay, even with what false principles, the instructors of early youth have come to their important task ; we feel inclined to ask whether it would not have been better, that nothing had been done ; that the whole subject had been left unoccupied. For, with what sordid, mercenary motives, have young children been incited to the love and practice of virtue ! One is praised for goodness, and rewarded with a *doll* ; another, with “ books with prints in them ; ” a third, with *sweetmeats*. In one school-book, we are told that “ the boys thought how good James and George were, to give them part of their cakes, and said, they would share with them, when they had good things, too. *Were not James and George good boys ?* ” In another, there is an account of a *good boy* assisting a dog, a half-starved horse, and a blind man, in the morning, who, in the evening, coöperatè to rescue him from thieves. In a third, where a story is related of a *dishonest boy* punished by a *broken leg*, and *honest Harry* rewarded with a *hat-full of apples*, it is wound up by the statement, that “ Harry carried the fruit to his mother, and told her, he was *now* convinced that children were always happiest when they did right.” Now, what kind of moral perceptions can be expected from youth, who, in their tender years, have been fed merely by such trash as this. Nothing but tangible rewards and punishments ! Good for good, evil for evil ! Is this the spirit of the Gospel of Christ ? “ Do not even the publicans the same ? ” Is it any thing more than one of the innumerable forms of selfishness ? the mere spirit of trade ? a mere barter of benevolence ? Every one, at all conversant with the state of infancy, must be aware, that nothing of the *mercantile* spirit is to be found there. Children are naturally *selfish* ; that is, they think only of themselves, or rather, *know little* of others ; but what they do give, they give freely, without price. Whilst endeavoring to correct this selfish spirit, then, let us be careful not to instil a worse. Let us not dig up the soil, and plant it with thistles. Much higher motives than these can be appreciated by very young children. They can as readily perceive the beauty and dignity of goodness as we can. They need not the stimulus, either of praise or rewards, to excite them to well-doing. Show them a noble example, and they will instantly follow it. Shall we not, then, try to prolong a little this beautiful state of artlessness ; to make a few better impressions, before we initiate

them into the world of traffic ? Is there not too much of the *mercantile* spirit in the community ? Is it not disgusting, to see a child calculating, to a day, the period of his majority, when his parents shall have no longer a claim on his services ? To see parents and children, who dwell in one house, eating at different tables ? brothers and sisters, bargaining closely like utter strangers ? husband and wife, with separate purses ?

Again, when dissuasives from vice are wanted, with what trickery and deceit are children assailed ! We have seen above, the *dishonest* boy punished with a *broken leg*, as if the good and bad were not alike subject to such casualties ; and, in the same spirit, one of our most popular spelling-books commences the reading lessons, with the following sentence :

“ A dog met a *bad* boy, and *bit* him.”

This is the genuine, old-fashioned style of frightening into obedience ; a practice still so prevalent, that it is not uncommon to hear a mere child using similar threats to his juniors ;—so readily do they copy our bad examples. The trick may answer a momentary purpose ; but what sort of impression must the child receive, when he finds, as assuredly, sooner or later, he must, that he has been deceived by his parents or moral instructors ? A powerful modern writer says, that “ a father is the young child’s deity.” Alas, that his implicit confidence should so soon be rooted out !

We have, in our country, talents of the very first order. Could they be devoted to a nobler purpose, than to rescue youth from such moral bunglers as these ? Could that be considered degrading employment, to genius of the highest rank, which would tend to elevate the whole community in the scale of virtue ? Sometimes, it is true, we are told that the Bible is all-sufficient for this purpose. But surely this is a mistaken view of things. God, in His wisdom, has provided materials in abundance, for the *food* of man ; but nowhere, in the temperate climes, are spontaneous products superior to crabs and sloes. In vain may the sun shine, and the dews of heaven descend, on the most fertile soil. Unless the skill and industry of the husbandman be exerted, it will bring forth little else than thorns and thistles. In like manner has the bounty of Providence supplied all sorts of materials for the *clothing* of man ; but in no case whatever are they fitted for use. It is the same in the moral world. In his various revelations, God has furnished all the *elements* of virtue ; but man is required to exert his intelligence, ere the precious fruits of goodness can be formed and ripened. And, in fact, it is only theoretically, that this is denied. Practically, it is admitted by all. Else, why so vast an apparatus of colleges and theological seminaries ; of churches and preachers ; of commentaries, tracts, and sermons ? No ! the Bible is not, of itself, sufficient. All the great truths are here ; but its moral lessons require to be expanded and applied. They must be brought to bear on all the various situations in which it is possible for man to be placed ; and, above all, its language must be accommodated to the opening faculties, the unripened intellect, of early youth. O ! how sweet, how blessed, will be the memory of the pioneer, who shall first sow the *genuine* seeds of duty and happiness in the virgin soil of infancy ; who, in stories, written in a style equally pure and simple, shall exhibit, by suitable *examples*, entirely devoid of authoritative dogmas, the beauty of Virtue, the deformity of Vice ; shall awaken in the youthful soul the delights of the social affections ; inspire it with gratitude and piety ; with frankness, generosity, and forbearance under injuries ; with resignation, humility, and fortitude ; and, above all, with a sacred regard for Truth ! It is through *SCHOOL-BOOKS* and *SCHOOLS* only, that a *genuine REFORMATION* can bless the world. The seeds sown from the pulpit fall among thorns ; “ and are choked with cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.”*

* Luke viii. 14.

These remarks, it will readily be perceived, apply only in the case of early youth. There is no lack of moral treatises, or moral lectures, for manhood, or even for the more advanced stages of youth. But these come too late. The passions, and the sordid animal appetites and propensities of our nature, having remained unchecked since infancy, have thus been yearly adding strength to strength ; and the conscience, led astray by these powerful emotions, and obscured and darkened, from want of exercise, either fails to respond at all, or answers wrong, when appealed to. No ! if we would have our youth habituated to attend to the Divine Light within, what Bacon beautifully calls the "sparkle of the purity of man's first estate," it must be developed and cultivated in *infancy*. The Christian poet, Cowper, observes, that,

"In *early days* the conscience has, in most,
A quickness which, in *later life*, is *lost*."—

Tirocinium, l. 109, 110.

And the best of all authority assures us, that "of *such* is the kingdom of Heaven." How important, then, that this state of comparative innocence should be preserved ; that conscience, while in its purity, should be awakened and cherished ; and that our youth, from their most tender age, should be habituated to consult it on every occasion ; and not only to consult it, but to listen to its monitions ; for, if we summon conscience, and neglect her dictates, we only harden ourselves in guilt. The bane of education, in *all* its branches, is the absurd practice of neglecting the first steps, of allowing bad habits to spring up, and become a part of our nature, in the illusory hope of rooting them out, in after-life. Alas ! it is then, indeed, a labor dire and weary wo. In some instances, doubtless, it may be effected ; but, in all cases, the eradication is imperfect ; and, in most, the attempt is a total failure. It is both shorter and easier, to proceed from ignorance to knowledge, than from error. They, who are in the last, must *unlearn*, before they can learn to any good purpose ; and the first part of this double task is by far the most irksome and difficult, for which reason, it is seldom undertaken.

CHAPTER VII.

Recapitulation.

Hitherto, gentle reader, our journey together has been almost wholly over rough acclivities, with but little to relieve the weariness of the ascent. Having now, however, reached the top, before we descend into the more pleasing and more flowery vale before us, it may perhaps be profitable, to take a retrospective view of our past labors, and inquire what are their results. May we not conclude, then,

I. That the *SCHOOL* is not the only place where our youth receive instruction ; but that, indirectly, they derive much of their education from

1. Observation and Experience.
2. The Conversation and Example of their parents and companions.
3. Public Opinion, or Tradition.
4. Public Worship.
5. The Town Meeting.
6. The District-School Meeting.
7. The Judicial Establishments.

II. That our *Direct Instruction*, or School Education, is weak, trifling, and of small extent, compared with our *Indirect Instruction*.

III. That, in Physical Education, Nature is our great instructress, and that our duty is chiefly negative ; namely, to deviate as little as possible from the course she indicates.

IV. That the unnecessary confinement, to which the child is subjected in early life, is alike prejudicial to his physical powers and to the development of his intellectual faculties.

V. That the location and internal arrangement of most of our school-houses are highly objectionable, tending to enervate the mind as well as to weaken the bodies of our youth.

VI. That the imperfect qualification of our teachers arises in a great measure from the fact, that, owing to the plan of alternating male and female teachers in the winter and summer schools, it is impossible for either to gain a support from the profession.

VII. That, in order to induce females properly to qualify themselves, permanent situations must be provided for them in the primary schools.

VIII. That the waste of time by the pupils, and other inconveniences, arising from the perpetual change of teachers, occasion a serious loss to the community.

IX. That Seminaries for Teachers too often mistake the object of their institution, by endeavoring to extend the knowledge of their students to the higher branches of learning, instead of imparting to them *the art of teaching*.

X. That the Discipline of schools is defective, either by being too lax and wavering, or, when sufficiently strict, by not allowing frequent intermissions at stated periods ; also, by the vulgar practices of the teacher, and by too frequent recurrence to scolding and brute force.

XI. That the initiatory branches of education are by far the most important ; and yet, that they are those which are generally intrusted to the most incompetent instructors.

XII. That the pernicious habit of mental wandering, or reading one thing while thinking of another, naturally arises from the *synthetic* mode of teaching reading.

XIII. That, by the *analytic* method, this pernicious habit is avoided, while, at the same time, the progress of the pupil is much more rapid.

XIV. That experience shows, that the oral method of teaching orthography is deceptive, and generally fails to produce good spellers.

XV. That the mode of teaching reading, by means of spelling, is absurd and highly pernicious.

XVI. That writing, as taught in our district schools, generally eventuates in a stiff, cramp hand.

XVII. That the fundamental processes of arithmetic are seldom properly taught or sufficiently practised ; that the general arrangement of the subject is defective ; and that the different modes of abbreviation are not pointed out.

XVIII. That the important advantages, which might be derived from the practice of mental arithmetic, are generally lost, by the mode in which it is studied.

XIX. That the practice of *committing words to memory*, instead of acquiring ideas, is still too general in the study of the higher branches of learning.

XX. That the subject of MORAL EDUCATION is sadly neglected in schools, and the little that is attempted, generally founded on false principles.

XXI. That it is through school-books and schools only, that a genuine REFORMATION can be effected in the community.

[To be continued.]

“So much should be required of teachers, from year to year, that no one, without keeping up with the spirit of the age, and the most approved methods of instruction, and without being well acquainted with the best system of education, would propose himself for this important employment.”—*Report of the School Committee of Holliston.*

MEMOIR OF DR. NATHANIEL BOWDITCH.

[Continued from the last Number, page 323.]

CHAPTER VII.

Review of the labors, &c., performed by Mr. Bowditch, during these voyages.—Habits while at sea : studies : desire to teach others : kindness to sailors, and to the sick.—Discovers errors in a book on Navigation.—Origin of ‘ American Practical Navigator : ’ success of it : industry of Mr. B. upon it.—Investigates higher branches of science : books on these subjects taken by Mr. B., in payment of improvements made in the ‘ Navigator. ’—‘ Mecanique Celeste. ’—Mr. B. reads history.—Learns Spanish, French, and Portuguese languages.—Anecdotes.—Chosen member of American Academy.—Receives honors from Harvard College.

Thus finished Mr. Bowditch's career as a sailor, having been, about eight years, engaged in this pursuit. But let us now review a little, and see what he was doing, during these voyages, and how he occupied his time. He was very regular in his habits. During the first two voyages, he attended to the duties of mate of the vessel, and stood his watches. This, of course, prevented him from studying as much as he otherwise would have done. He, moreover, as we have seen, took fewer books with him. But, during the next two voyages, the Captain excused him from the watches, and he was able to study without the smallest interruption. After the deck had been washed in the morning, he walked for half an hour ; he then went into the cabin to study, until the time arrived at which he was to observe the sun, which is done in order to tell whereabouts in the ocean a vessel is. Having finished this, he usually dined. After this, he slept a few moments, or took a walk, and then studied again until tea-time. After supper, he was again at work until nine, when he used to walk for some time, cheerfully talking with his comrades. After this, he usually labored until late at night ; and, in order not to disturb his fellow-passengers, he did not keep a light in the cabin, but frequently stood upon the cabin stairway, studying by the light of the binacle lamp, where the compass is kept. Whenever the vessel arrived at a port, he was still the same hard student, but in a different way, perhaps. The instant he was freed from the duties of weighing pepper on the coast of Sumatra, that moment he flew to his books. No time was wasted, either in foul or fair weather. It made no difference to him, whether the ship was resting motionless upon the water, or tossing upon the heaviest swell, he was always a worker. But there was yet another and more beautiful trait still, in his character. He not merely loved study, himself, but he was determined to persuade all others to love it, also. During his first voyage, he used to go to the fore-castle, or sailors' cabin, and carry his books of Navigation, and teach them how to guide a ship by the rules found in these books. He then went on deck, and explained to each one the method of using the quadrant and sextant, two instruments used by a sea-captain. There is an old man now living in Salem, who, when speaking of this disposition of Mr. Bowditch, said, " I was the steward on board the vessel, and Mr. Bowditch frequently scolded me, because I did not come to study with him more steadily. " It is a fact, that every sailor on board the ship, during that voyage, became afterwards captain, and probably some of them would never have risen so high, had it not been for the kindness of their friend. I love to think of this trait in his character. He delighted in learning, for its own sake, and he was always pleased when he could find some one upon whom he could bestow all his acquirements. He had no mean standard of comparison between himself and his fellows, but desired to give and receive as much good as it was possible for him to bestow or receive.

He was beloved for this by all ; but his kindness of heart led him not mere-

ly to teach those who knew less than he, but he was wont to seek them, when sick, in order to relieve them. One of them, who lately died, wrote in a letter, after alluding to his willingness to teach others, "But the kindness and attention to the poor seasick cabin-boy are to this day (April, 1838) uppermost in my memory, and will last, when his learning is remembered no more." How bright were his talents and love of study, how beautiful his devotion to others' comfort and improvement! He might have been as learned, without displaying this regard for others. But he would not then have had such tributes of love, as was displayed by this old sailor, who remembered his kindness rather than his instruction.

But let us examine his particular studies, pursued while at sea. We have already seen, that, from a boy, he had loved simple arithmetic, and on becoming older, had studied deeply in mathematics, a kind of learning similar in character to arithmetic, only much more difficult and important. During the long voyages to India, he had ample opportunity for following this branch of science; consequently, we find that his chief studies were upon that subject. On the first voyage, he discovered many errors in a book on Navigation, errors, some of which were so important, that, by their means, several vessels had been shipwrecked. This erroneous work was originally published in London, by a man named Hamilton Moore, and it was almost exclusively used by seamen. It had been republished in America, in 1798, by Mr. Blunt, then living in Newburyport. One edition was published, and a second was about to be issued, in 1799, when Mr. Blunt learned, by means of a mutual friend, that Mr. Bowditch, during his two first voyages, had detected many of these errors, and was willing to inform him of them. Mr. Blunt immediately made application to the young navigator, and received the assistance he wanted. Finding that Mr. Bowditch had within him the means of rendering essential service, Mr. Blunt proposed to him, when starting on his fourth voyage, that is, to India, to examine all the tables, and see what number of errors he could find. Mr. Bowditch agreed to the proposal; and, during this voyage, his time was much occupied with this task, a very wearisome, but, as it proved eventually, a profitable one, as it regards reputation and pecuniary success. The mistakes were so numerous, that he found it much easier to make a new work, and introduce therein his own improvements; so that Mr. B., before the termination of the voyage, decided to make some arrangement for this purpose. The consequence was, that, instead of publishing a third edition of Moore's Navigator, in 1802, the first edition of the 'American Practical Navigator' was published by Mr. Bowditch, under his own name, Mr. Blunt being proprietor. Thus was laid, at the age of twenty-nine, the foundation of a work on navigation, that has kept constantly before the public, as one of the best of the kind either in America or England. It passed through its tenth edition a short time before Mr. Bowditch's death. Upwards of thirty thousand copies have been published since its commencement. It soon superseded entirely Mr. Moore's, and was early republished in London. And it was not only obtained by every American seaman, but even English ships sought for Bowditch's Navigator, as their safety during their long voyages. Many amusing anecdotes are related, in reference to this book. An American captain once took passage in an English ship, from the Isle of France, for St. Helena. After being a few days out, the passenger, about noon, brought his 'Navigator' (one of Bowditch's editions) on deck, for the purpose of using it. While thus engaged, the English captain of the vessel walked up, and looked at the work. "Why," says he, "you use the same work that we do. Pray, where did you get that?" And great was the surprise of the Englishman, when he learned that the author of the book, he was using every day of his life, was the near neighbor and friend of the person he was talking with. Little did he imagine that he was dependent upon the efforts of a simple son of a cooper, for the valuable information by which he was enabled to go from

sea to sea, in comparative safety. But how is it, that this work has been able to remain so long one of the best works of the kind? Because Mr. Bowditch bestowed intense pains upon it, and with every new edition made all the improvements possible. He moreover brought all his learning to bear upon it. In the explanations of the rules, he was simple, so that the most ignorant could understand them. But, in addition to all this, as we have already stated, he introduced all the new methods which he himself had discovered. One of these methods was favorably noticed by a celebrated French astronomer, in a Journal published in 1808.

But, although his attention was much devoted to this book on navigation, he evidently considered that as of little moment, compared with higher objects. During the long voyages, he had been studying the higher branches of knowledge, the difficult calculations of the motions of the heavenly bodies. The deep love he had for these pursuits had a most pleasing effect upon him. If he were sad or disturbed, he sought peace and cheerfulness in "his peaceful mathematics." As arithmetic had been the darling pursuit of his boyhood, so now the curious and intricate problems of mathematics, or sublime theories of the planets, occupied his best leisure hours. We have seen that, long before going to sea, he studied French, for the purpose of reading a work on mathematics. He continued to study deeply into the works of that country. Some of you may know, that about the last of the last century, at the Revolution in France, all the nation was aroused, every branch of learning and of art received new life. The consequence was, that a vast many men of the highest genius arose, and, patronised by government, they put forth to the world extraordinary works of learning. Most of these, when upon astronomy, Mr. Bowditch procured for himself, by means of the publisher of the 'Navigator.' Among these came one to which we have already alluded, and which may be explained by the following anecdote. Soon after his arrival from his fourth voyage, Mr. Bowditch was walking towards the lower part of the town of Salem, and he met his old friend, Captain Prince. They entered into conversation, and Mr. B. observed that he had been much pleased with receiving a book from France, which he longed to see, as he learned, from some notices taken of it, that it was superior to any thing ever before written by man, and which very few were able to comprehend. This work was the one which now renders his name widely known in Europe. It was the work on the 'Mechanism of the Heavens,' formerly spoken of, in which the author treats of the forms, weights, motions, &c. of the planets and other heavenly bodies. Nothing equal to it had appeared since the time when Sir Isaac Newton, about a hundred years before, published his views upon the same subject. In fact, La Place's work was the carrying out of the principles laid down by the great Newton. But of this work we shall have to speak hereafter, and therefore we shall say no more of it, at present, but finish our remarks upon his labors during the period of his seafaring life. He was still engaged in extracting from various works, or, in other words, in filling up his volumes of manuscripts,—though now, from the increase of his property, he was enabled to buy the originals; and of course, his manuscripts were chiefly his sea journals, and the notes made by himself upon the various authors he read. But he did not confine himself entirely to science. He read history, and some works of a literary character; although he never spent much time upon inferior books. Why read any thing you cannot speak of? he used frequently to say. He likewise studied the Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese languages. His method of learning a language is instructive. As soon as he determined to study one, he bought a Bible, grammar, and dictionary, in that tongue. After learning a few of the pronouns and auxiliary verbs, he began to translate, and usually commenced with the first chapter of the Gospel of St. John, because in the few first verses there are many repetitions. Having learned them thoroughly, he

proceeded to other portions of the Bible, with which he was most acquainted. When at home, he always carried the Bible to church, and used it instead of an English one, during the services. But he had another plan, which is very useful to one who has a bad memory. I will now explain to you one of his vocabularies, or collections of words with their meanings attached thereto, so arranged, that he could refer much more easily to them than by a common dictionary. Although he did not learn German until a long time after the period of his life which we are now speaking of, still, as the German vocabulary is the most perfect, I will describe it. It is made upon two large sheets, one foot broad and more than a foot and a half high, which, with the inside of the covers, make six pages. The pages are divided into columns, about one and a half inches wide,—that is, large enough to admit, in very small writing, a word with its signification by its side. Of course, the columns are divided for the letters of the alphabet in a manner proportioned to the number of pages of each letter in the dictionary. Having thus prepared his book, whenever he found that he was obliged (for want of memory) to look at the dictionary more than once for the signification of a word, he wrote that word in his vocabulary; and, by the act of writing, strengthened, in some measure, his memory of that word, and moreover, he could turn to it immediately, and not lose time in turning over the leaves of a larger book. The number of words thus seen at a glance, as it were, was remarkable. In the above-described six pages there are eleven thousand German words, all written distinctly, but in small hand, and without any repetitions, and with as many abbreviations as he himself chose. I have been thus minute upon this subject, not because I think that all ought to make vocabularies, but because some may be benefited, some, for instance, who have bad memories. Moreover, I wished to speak to you of them, as marks of his perseverance.

Two important events took place during this period of Mr. Bowditch's life, which it becomes our duty to record. On the twenty-eighth of May, 1799, he was chosen a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. This Society was the first which bestowed upon him the honor of membership of its body. It was composed of men of science, combined for the purpose of improving themselves and the community in knowledge. He continued a member of this body during his life; and subsequently, in May, 1829, just thirty years after becoming a member, he was chosen its President, in which office he was continued until the day of his death.

Another honor, and one which was more pleasant to him than any received at any time afterwards, was bestowed during this period. In 1802, his ship was wind-bound in Boston, and he left it, for the purpose of attending the annual commencement at Cambridge College. He knew but few individuals there, though he had corresponded with some of the Professors; and one of the Corporation of the College, Chief Justice Parsons, was one of his kindest friends. He went alone, and, while listening in the crowd to the names of those upon whom the honors were conferred, he thought he heard his own pronounced, but he supposed that he might have been mistaken, inasmuch as the notice was given in Latin. But how great was his emotion, when he heard from a friend that his suspicions were well founded! It was to him the proudest day of his life. And we, who know his humble origin, his simplicity and modesty, can in some measure understand the thrill of pleasure that must have run through him, when he found himself thus noticed by the first and oldest University in the land. And why was he thus noticed? Because he had well improved the hours of his life; because his days and nights had been spent in activity and earnest study. This tribute was the sweetest he ever received. In after-life, when his fame was established, and the great societies of Europe all poured upon him their diplomas, he always looked upon them as of small moment, compared with this his first, earliest proof of esteem from his fellow-men.

Having now completed his sea-life, let us enter upon his new scene of energy and benevolence, as a citizen and father ; and our next Chapter will include several years of his life in Salem.

[To be continued.]

[From the Norfolk Democrat.]

OUR COMMON SCHOOLS.

God has established two schools, the family and the church, and no more ; the rest are of man's invention. They may be good ; they may be bad ; at any rate, they are of human origin.

The Common School, however, is or should be an essential part of the family ; at least, such is the view I take of it. I would as soon give up the family or the church,—almost so,—as the Common School. It must be *sustained*, like the institution of which I have said it forms, essentially, a part ; whatever be the hazard or the sacrifice.

Why, then, is it not sustained ? Why do we hear, on every hand, such bitter complaints of the public apathy ? Why are some of our best and most philanthropic men, our master-spirits, condemned to toil and wear themselves out in this cause, and no man regards it ? Why is our countryman, Woodbridge,—late editor for many years of the pioneer work on education in the country,—after having worn himself out, and expended thousands of dollars in this cause, suffered to sicken, and perhaps perish unheeded, in a foreign land, while those who have rendered a sacrifice far less important to their country are lauded, and pensioned, and *monumented* ? Why are the editors of our only two Common-School Journals in New England compelled to edit their papers gratuitously, and even then see their very existence every hour endangered ? My countrymen, “these things ought not so to be.”

I have labored, in my feeble manner,—and made sacrifices, too,—for years, in the same cause ; and therefore know how to sympathize with those who are laboring and suffering therein. In fact, I still labor in it. It is but recently that I prepared an article on the neglect of health in our Common Schools, and published it in the ‘Library of Health ;’ which I have solicited the editor of this paper (the Norfolk Democrat) to copy. I make no apology for desiring to give currency to my own productions ; it is not because they are mine, but because they are needed. Much of the credit,—if credit there be,—is due, as will be seen, to Mr. Mann, the Secretary of our Board of Education in Massachusetts.

W. A. A.

HEALTH IN COMMON SCHOOLS.

In the State of New York, and in some parts of New England, it is estimated that about one fourth of the population attend the Common, or District, Schools, eight months in a year. If this estimate is correct, then it follows that more than one million of the population of New York and New England spend almost half of their waking hours, for eight months in a year, during every year from the age of four to sixteen,—equal, in the aggregate, to four whole years of life,—in the Common School.

Now, what can be more obvious, than that every child, in passing from the age of four to sixteen, ought to be in a situation to improve in health, no less than in knowledge and morals ? But are all the children in our Common Schools thus improving ? They must be doing one of three things, in regard to health, in these schools, during their connection with them. They must be stationary, improving, or retrograding. Let us consider the subject. The question concerns the happiness of too many human beings

to be lightly passed over. Let us look at facts ; for we very fortunately have facts in our possession.

Accompanying the latest ' Abstract of the Massachusetts School Returns,' as prepared by Mr. Mann, Secretary of the Board of Education, are many fragments, or extracts of reports from school committees, in regard to the condition of our schools. These reports, indeed, constituted, in all, about twelve hundred compactly-written letter-paper pages ; but Mr. M. was restricted to such selections as were striking.

We find from these selections, or extracts, that there is a great want of attention to the comfort and the health of children in Common Schools throughout the State ; for though reports were received from only one hundred and seventy towns, no less than seventy of these complain more or less of their schoolhouses,—their location, size, structure, external or internal arrangements, &c. And of those who do not complain, not a few speak of the number of scholars as being too great for the house. Nor does the silence of a considerable number,—so far as the extracts from the reports are concerned,—of the school committees on this subject, prove that all is as it should be in this respect, especially when we find but about half a dozen who say distinctly that their schoolhouses are what they ought to be.

But let us take it for granted that this seventy to one hundred and seventy, is about a fair proportion of the bad or unhealthy, to the good or healthy, schoolhouses throughout New England and New York. At this rate, the health of seven seventeenths, or nearly six hundred thousand of the children of these seven States, if improving at all, cannot be improving as it ought to be ; since, for the purposes of health, good schoolhouses are indispensable.

Let it not be understood, however, that the schoolhouses in the seventy towns we have mentioned are all equally bad for the purposes of health, or even that all of them are objectionable in the view of those who have reported concerning them. It frequently happens, however, that they are all deemed objectionable, in a greater or less degree. It is sometimes said expressly, as in Uxbridge, Edgartown, and Kingston, that there is not a good schoolhouse in town, or not one as it should be ; and in a few instances, that there is not a single one that is not a disgrace to the inhabitants.

But what are the particulars on which these complaints are grounded ? In other words, what is the matter with the schoolhouses in question ? and why are they so highly censured ?

In the first place, they are frequently too small. This, joined to neglect of ventilation,—a very common fault by the way, and one of which many and loud complaints are made by the committees in their reports,—is an evil of the first magnitude, and deserves something more than a passing notice.

One element of health is general cheerfulness. But if there were no other objection to the narrow dimensions of most of our schoolhouses, than that they are very unpleasant and prison-like, in their appearance, we conceive that this alone would be a sufficient reason for enlarging them. Compare them, for example, with our spacious churches. How puny, how contracted !

A schoolhouse, it is true, which is designed to accommodate fifty pupils, does not need to be as large as a church for five hundred worshippers. There is no good reason, however, why it should not be at least one tenth as large ; nay, much more than one tenth, since the pupils spend more hours of each week-day in the schoolroom, than they do of each Sabbath-day in the church, and are expected to attend to various movements and exercises in the former, while they sit still, chiefly, in the latter.

Let us consider the disparity of size. A church intended to accommodate five hundred persons is usually, not to say often, eighty feet long by sixty broad, while a schoolhouse for fifty or sixty pupils is seldom over

twenty feet by eighteen ; we believe we may say generally not more than twenty by sixteen. Here, then, the schoolroom is only *one fifteenth* as large as the church. How is this ? Why are not our schoolhouses as spacious, for the same number of persons, as our churches ?

But it is unfair, after all, to contrast the schoolhouse with the church. First, because the church itself is usually too large, or rather the congregation is usually too large, (for it were better for the health and morals of all concerned, especially the minister, if our congregations were smaller,) and therefore an improper standard of comparison ; and secondly, because the school, as we have already intimated, is designed as a place of business, and our churches, for the most part, as places of quiet. The teacher in a church is usually the only *business* man,—we mean now so far as manual performance is concerned,—but in a school all are or should be employed.

Let us then contrast our schoolhouses with our dwellinghouses, or rather our schoolrooms with our parlors. In this comparison, how stands the case ? Are not our parlors, which only accommodate from five to ten persons, very generally as large, or nearly as large, as our schoolrooms, which should accommodate forty or fifty ? What family would be willing to occupy a parlor no larger in proportion to the number of its occupants than most of our schoolrooms ?

We protest against this niggardliness in regard to the size of schoolrooms, were it only for appearances' sake ; we mean, when we take into consideration the effect which an appearance of constraint has upon the cheerfulness, and consequently upon the general health, of people, especially children. *They*, at any rate, were not made to be imprisoned, either in a dwellinghouse or a schoolhouse. They were made for freedom, joyous, high-bounding freedom, like the sportive lambs and other young animals ; and may God forgive those who *ignorantly* war against this tendency of their natures.

But we object still more strongly to schoolrooms of narrow dimensions, on account of the impurity of the air which they contain. A distinguished British writer on health assures us, that man subsists more upon air than upon food and drink. And must it not be so ? A person may live two or three days without food or drink, and yet not materially suffer in his constitution. The suffering is almost wholly temporary. But let him be deprived of air, for as many minutes, and he becomes as incapable of thought as if he were dead ; and in a few minutes more, life is extinct. Even if restored, after the privation of a minute or two, he seems not to be restored fully. He suffers for a long time, perhaps, more or less, as long as he lives.

Need we advert, in this place, to the philosophy, physiology rather, of breathing ? Need we say to our readers, that the whole mass of blood in the human body, amounting, in an adult, to twenty-five pints or more, ought to pass through the lungs once in three or four minutes, and ought there to come in close contact with the purest of atmospheric air ; and that if this air is not pure, the blood does not undergo those changes in the lungs, without which, if life could even be prolonged, health could not be maintained ? Need we bring forward facts, for they are to be had all around us, to show that breathing the air renders it impure, in several ways ; and that if these impurities cannot escape, and a purer sort of air rush in to supply their place, and prevent them from acting internally upon our lungs, we must not only undergo many bad feelings at the time, but must also be sowing the seeds of disease, and gradually undermining the constitution ?

We will present only one or two facts, both for want of room, and because we have often adverted to this subject. We can assure our readers, however, that instead of one, we could adduce a hundred, perhaps a thousand, were it indispensably necessary.

In the hospital at Dublin, during four years, two thousand nine hundred

and forty-four children, out of seven thousand six hundred and fifty, or more than thirty-eight in every hundred, died within a fortnight after their birth. Dr. Clark, the attending physician, suspecting a want of pure air, undertook to ventilate the rooms, and by means of pipes six inches in diameter, introduced into all the rooms a supply of fresh and pure air. The consequence was, that during the three years following, only one hundred and sixty-five died out of four thousand two hundred and forty-three, or less than four in one hundred. As there were no other known causes of improvement in the health of these children, it was therefore concluded, we think justly, that during the four years we first mentioned, two thousand six hundred and forty-seven children had perished for want of pure air.

The story of the destruction of lives in the Black Hole at Calcutta, where, out of one hundred and forty-six persons crowded into a close room for ten hours, one hundred and twenty-three died of bad air, though a terrible one, is as nothing to this affair of the Dublin hospital. And yet there is no doubt, there can be none, that a good deal of sickness and premature death of the children in our New-England families is owing to their confinement in narrow, unventilated schoolrooms. Let us hear, for a moment, the opinions of the authors of the reports of which we have been speaking.

The committee of Northfield say, "It is a generally acknowledged fact, that fresh, wholesome air is not only necessary for health, but also for the exercise of the mind; and that hot, close, bad air causes languor and stupidity, and prevents close application. It is the opinion of many who have given particular attention to this subject, that many of the bodily diseases which are prevalent among the young, in our cities and large places, have their origin in the unhealthy, uncomfortable schoolrooms, where children pass from six to eight hours a day for most of the year. In the country, in our own village, we may not yet have experienced so many evils from bad air and inconvenient seats, because our schools have been shorter and smaller. But our schools are now lengthening and enlarging, and we are introducing close stoves. May it not be well for us to learn from the bitter experience of others, and make early provision for the comfort and health of the rising generation?"

The committee of Swansea say, "To put fifty children into a space of four hundred feet of floor, is to unfit them for vigorous effort. The air is pregnant with death. And such is the fact in relation to the schoolhouses generally in Swansea."

The report of the committee from Kingston says, "There is not a single public schoolhouse in town that is not a disgrace to us, and a sure and inevitable cause of much sickness and continued ill-health to many of our children."

Again, in the same report, in speaking of a particular schoolhouse,—that in District No. 1,—the committee go on to say, "Confinement is never pleasant under any circumstances. Who is there that would accept the wealth of the Indies in exchange for fresh air and the use of his limbs? And yet you crowd from forty to sixty children into that ill-constructed, miserable shell of a building. Now it is a fact beyond dispute, that in a room of that size,—say twenty-four by sixteen feet,—thirty-five children will render the air unfit for breathing in forty-five minutes. To be sure some fresh air is admitted by the numerous cracks and crevices all around; but allowing one fourth for this, and after one hour the children are injured by every breath. The injury at each breath is small, we grant. But who that has been confined in a crowded schoolroom, or any other room, has not felt the want of fresh air, an article with which the Almighty has supplied us in greater quantities than any other, but only in proportion to our wants? Who has not felt the dull headache, the pressure of the brain, as it seems, (when, in fact, it is cruel *oppression*,) the dizzy, sleepy drowsiness of a schoolroom atmosphere? Who does not remember the new life and anima-

tion, the renewed strength and courage, he has often felt, when he has emerged from one of these real prisons, to breathe the pure air of heaven?"

In reference to the schoolhouses in Uxbridge, though the committee admit that they have no good schoolhouses, they yet speak with more severity of some than others. Of two, in particular, they complain that "they are old, inconvenient, uncomfortable, and even dangerous to the health, if not to the limbs, of teachers and pupils."

In Ashburnham, also, we hear of the schoolhouses being not only dangerous to the health of the children, but as being actually a cause of death to some of them. "There is not that attention paid to ventilation," the committee say, "which the subject demands. In small crowded schoolrooms, warmed by stoves, the air soon becomes unfit for respiration. The children complain of headache, and become restless and weary, which renders them totally unfit for study. This may be remedied, in a measure, by keeping the room, at all times, in an equal temperature by means of a thermometer. Schoolrooms should be constantly ventilated. A good way is to let off the heated and unwholesome air through a scuttle over head, communicating with the external air, and also by letting in fresh air under the stove. The unwholesome state of the air in schoolrooms, the past Winter, has no doubt been the cause of much sickness, and in some instances of death."

Of the schoolhouses in Middleborough, the report is as follows: "The greatest trouble usually is, that the rooms are too small. Besides the necessary confusion and disorder in such narrow and ill-contrived rooms, they are necessarily unhealthful. Undoubtedly many of the cases of sickness of children, which are supposed to be occasioned by going to and returning from school, are occasioned, much more probably, by their being confined, six or seven hours in a day, in a narrow and stifled schoolroom. This evil, the committee believe, has been too much overlooked. They regard it as a serious impediment to the real prosperity of our schools. In making these suggestions, they would recommend, that the several districts, that wish to have their children arrive at manhood with vigorous and robust bodies and well-cultivated minds, examine into the condition of their schoolhouses, and act with reference to the true and best interest of their children, regardless of pecuniary considerations."

From Hanover, we hear the same account, in substance, which we hear from so many other towns in the Commonwealth. "Many of our schoolhouses are thought to be unsuitable for the purpose; some are badly constructed, and some too small, injuring the health and depressing the spirits of the occupants."

In the report from Fairhaven, we are told, that many of the diseases to which children are subject are undoubtedly occasioned by sudden exposures to the chill of the external air, after a confinement in rooms where the same air, with but little change, is breathed over and over again for several hours together.

But we need not extend our list of quotations. Enough has been said to show the views of intelligent men, throughout the State, on the subject. Enough, at any rate, to show that the health of the pupils in our Common Schools is neither improving nor yet stationary, but actually retrograding.

Two questions will here very properly arise. What is the proper size of schoolrooms? And having been erected and properly arranged, what special provision ought to be made for their ventilation?

In the penitentiary at Philadelphia, an amount of thirteen hundred cubic feet of air is allowed to every prisoner in solitary confinement, as being the least amount of space which was deemed compatible with health. Even in the State prison at Charlestown, Massachusetts, one hundred and seventy-one and a half cubic feet are allowed to each prisoner's cell; in addition to which, provision is made, by means of holes in the walls, for free ventilation. "The French writers on hospitals," says Mr. Woodbridge, late editor of

the 'Annals of Education,' "deem it indispensable that each patient, even in the private sick-room of a school, should have a space equal to fourteen hundred cubic feet ; and such is the plan of the best European hospitals. Sir Gilbert Blane says six hundred cubic feet are necessary in England, for each patient ; and that with a less quantity it is impossible to maintain the requisite purity of the air."

"If we take but half the quantity required by the French," continues the same excellent and intelligent writer, "it will probably be a better rule for our climate ; and when we recollect the superior means of ventilation in the immense rooms of a hospital, many of which are seventy feet long and fourteen high, this will be by *no means too much* for a small, close schoolroom. We shall then have a space of seven hundred cubic feet for each pupil ; or, supposing the room to be eight feet high, each child should have eighty-seven square feet, or a space eight feet by eleven."

It appears from facts collected by Mr. W. J. Adams, as set forth in a lecture delivered by him before the American Institute of Instruction, in 1830, that the smallest allowance of space in several distinguished schools which he visited was seven and a quarter feet, and the largest sixteen, to each pupil ; or, if the room were ten feet high, from seventy-two to one hundred and sixty cubic feet.

The celebrated Joseph Lancaster, whose schoolrooms in England were fifteen or twenty feet high, in many cases allowed nine square feet to a pupil, or from one hundred and thirty to one hundred and eighty cubic feet to each ; and this, too, where the most rigid economy was demanded. Mr. Woodbridge, in view of these facts, for we are still indebted to him, supposes one hundred and fifty cubic feet of space the smallest amount which should be allotted to each individual.

In our Prize Essay on Schoolhouses, prepared for and published by the American Institute of Instruction just referred to, we have come to the conclusion, chiefly from observation and reflection, and without much knowledge, at the time, of the opinion of others, that "a space four feet square, and of the usual height of rooms, is the least which can be occupied by a pupil, for *one hour*, with safety." This coincides very nearly with the view of Mr. Woodbridge, and with that of Mr. Lancaster, as quoted by him. Even this is not enough, however, without due regard to ventilation ; and is somewhat less than is allotted to each State prisoner at Charlestown.

One room in New York, fitted up by an individual for a private school, afforded three hundred cubic feet of space to each pupil ; and an indigent friend of ours, though in poverty, long paid a rent of three hundred dollars or more a year, in Boston, for such a room as would give to each pupil five hundred cubic feet ; and believed that even this allowance was not too liberal.

What, then, are we to say, when we find from facts like those before us, respecting the interior of Massachusetts, that, instead of one hundred and fifty cubic feet of air to an individual, the least allowance which can comport at all with safety, the best of our schoolrooms hardly contain fifty, and many not forty.

In Swansea, as we have already seen, a school of fifty children appears to have about sixty cubic feet of air apiece. No wonder that we hear that the air is "pregnant with death." No wonder the average attendance in this town, even in the winter, is only three hundred and three, while the whole number of pupils, of a suitable age to be in school, is from four hundred and seventeen to four hundred and fifty. Who would not stay away if he could ?

In Shutesbury, between eighty and ninety scholars were often confined in a room twenty-five feet by seventeen. Here was probably less than forty feet of air to a pupil. In another room in the same town, the space was not much more ample. Can it be wondered at, then, that "the scholars ap-

peared to lack ambition ;" and that there was a general prevalence of "dulness and indifference ?"

The report from one of the districts in Stoneham is as follows : "The house in No. 3, if closed tight, will not contain air enough to supply the lungs of one man eight hours ; yet they shut up, in this den of impure air, fifteen or twenty children six hours in a day !" No wonder, that, while there are in this town from two hundred and seventy-five to three hundred children that ought to be in school, the average attendance is only one hundred and sixty-nine.

We have spoken of the state of things in the *interior* of Massachusetts, but it is not the interior alone that suffers, as we learn from other sources than the reports to which we have so frequently referred. It is not yet three years, since Dr. Perry, a highly-respectable physician of Boston, found a primary school in Boylston square, containing sixty children, having only about thirty-four cubic feet of air apiece. The teacher and many of the pupils were pale and sickly. But these accommodations had been the only accommodations of the school for 13 years ! It was the opinion of this physician, that "no child could be exposed to the air of this room six hours a day, for two years, without the formation of tubercles (the seed of consumption) in the lungs."

Excited by this statement of Dr. Perry, we visited the same school, as well as several others in Boston, and found every thing as had been stated ; not the least exaggeration. We also visited several others in the Autumn of 1838, not two years ago, and found things no better. In one instance, we found seventy pupils in a room eighteen by sixteen feet, and the ceiling quite low. Here were only about thirty cubic feet of air to each pupil. The pupils, however, were more healthy than in some other schools we visited ; because the teacher had taken pains to study the laws of health and life, and to practise according to her knowledge, in the management of her school.

In another of these Boston primary schoolrooms, which we visited, the teacher, having been requested, by a person who entertained doubts as to the purity of the air, to preserve a record of the disabilities of her pupils for a short time, found from that record, that in the short space of about ten weeks, namely, from July the twelfth to September the twenty-fourth, and that with even less sickness in the city than is common at that season, nineteen of her pupils were absent, on account of ill health, no less than one hundred and thirty-six days. The number of her pupils, if we remember correctly, was about fifty.

Now, the last-named room was not seriously defective in size, but it was not well ventilated ; and this alone, or almost alone, was the cause of the ill health of the pupils. And unhealthy they were, indeed. There was hardly a healthy face to be seen. Some were pale, others were flushed, or at least had very red cheeks. Perhaps it is unnecessary to say, that neither of these appearances of the face indicates the best of health.

Suppose our schools in general, throughout New England and New York, suffer one fourth as much as this Boston school does, on account of ventilation,—and we are of opinion that the suffering is in a much larger proportion than one fourth,—the amount of suffering and loss of time in a year would be exceedingly great. According to the best estimates we have been able to make, it could not be less, in the aggregate, than five thousand nine hundred and eighteen years ; or a space of time equal to the whole average lives of one hundred and forty-eight individuals. Nurseries of health, indeed, such places as these, where time is lost at this rapid rate, and to such an amazing extent, by ill health !

"A very learned man often has not the slightest power of communicating instruction."

LABOR NOT HOSTILE TO MENTAL IMPROVEMENT.—Are labor and self-culture irreconcilable to each other? In the first place, as we have seen, a man in the midst of labor may and ought to give himself to the most important improvement, that he may cultivate his sense of justice, his benevolence, and the desire of perfection. Toil is the school for these high principles; and we have here a strong presumption, that, in other respects, it does not necessarily blight the soul. Next, we have seen that the most fruitful sources of truth and wisdom are not books, precious as they are, but experience and observation; and these belong to all conditions. It is another important consideration, that almost all labor demands intellectual activity, and is best carried on by those who invigorate their minds; that the two interests, toil and self-culture, are friendly to each other. It is mind, after all, which does the work of the world; so that the more there is of mind, the more work will be accomplished. A man, in proportion as he is intelligent, makes a given force accomplish a greater task, makes skill take the place of muscles, and, with less labor, give a better product. Make men intelligent, and they become inventive,—find shorter processes. Their knowledge of Nature helps them to turn its laws to account, to understand the substance on which they work, and to seize on useful hints which experience continually furnishes. It is among workmen that some of the most useful machines have been contrived. Spread education, and, as the history of this country shows, there will be no bounds to useful inventions.—*Channing.*

GOOD FOR EVIL.—In the following anecdote we have an exemplification of the Apostolic injunction,—“overcome evil with good.” If we possess teachable minds, I doubt whether a logical and learned essay would do more to enforce upon us a prayerful consideration of these words. From the unsophisticated juvenile heart, truth in new and forcible light often gushes out. Blessed are they who, laying aside all love of dominion, are ready to sit with Mary at the foot of the Cross, there to listen to the praise of God, perfected by “babes and sucklings.”

“A very little girl was fond of reading the Bible, and it was there she learned how to treat those who injured her. One day she came to her mother, very much delighted to show her some plums that a friend had given her. The mother said, ‘she is very kind, she has given you a great many.’ ‘Yes,’ said the little girl, ‘she is very kind, indeed, and she gave me more than these, but I have given some away.’ ‘Ah, my child, to whom did you give them?’ ‘I gave them to a girl that pushes me off the path, and makes faces at me.’ ‘But why did you give them to such a naughty girl?’ ‘Because I thought that would make her know that I wished to be kind to her; and she will not perhaps be unkind and rude to me again.’”

Here is heavenly wisdom flowing from the infant mind. Here is eloquent *preaching with sublime practice*. Speak on, ye young heralds of the Cross, in words of truth, in actions of purity. The world, the church, the ministry, need your labors. Let man, woman, and child, go out with *heaven's credentials*, and speak as the good heart is ever wont to speak. The “field is the world,” and great is the darkness thereof. Each step we take is missionary ground. Idolatry and practical infidelity cover the whole earth! Enter, ye good hearts and true, the vineyard of your master, and labor faithfully for the redemption of the world.—*Practical Christian.*

THE SCHOOL LIBRARY. Volume XIX. of the Larger Series, ‘Importance of Practical Education and Useful Knowledge: being a selection from his Orations and other Discourses, by Edward Everett.’ Juvenile Series, Volume XI., ‘Lives of Christopher Columbus and Americus Vesputius;’ Volume XII., ‘Lives of Vasco Nunez de Balboa, Hernando Cortez, and Francisco Pizarro.’ Published by Marsh, Capen, Lyon, & Webb.

[THE COMMON SCHOOL JOURNAL; published semi-monthly, by Marsh, Capen, Lyon, & Webb, No. 109, Washington street, Boston: HORACE MANN, Editor. Price, One dollar a year.]